

[I am the Presence]

Beliefs & Customs - [????]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview 13

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Herman Spector

ADDRESS 4121 Third Avenue, N.Y.C.

DATE February 20, 1939

SUBJECT I AM THE PRESENCE

1. Date and time of interview
2. Place of interview HEAVEN, 123rd Street and Lenox Avenue, New York City
3. Name and address of informant Father Divine, Angels, Followers
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

See story.

Library of Congress

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Herman Spector

ADDRESS 4121 Third Avenue, N.Y.C.

DATE February 20, 1939

SUBJECT I AM THE PRESENCE I AM THE PRESENCE

The little brown man is seated at the center of a long table that forms the lower bar of a festive "U" in the rather delapidated heaven. Electric bulbs sparkle; posters proclaim the Message, inculcate the proper attitude:

NO NEGATIVE DISSCUSSIONS

OR GOSSIPING,

BUT MORE PRAISE FOR FATHER

and an endless succession of dishes, heaped with the bounty of the Presence is handed along the flanking tables, where colored and white believers ingest a 15 cent banquet that passes understanding. Flimsy balconies at both sides of the hall are packed to the handrails with swaying, shouting, singing, stamping women: "O, Father is a victory, Father is a victory, Father is a victory That overcomes the world... We know that Father is a Victory," etc. Standees inside and outside the "U" do not venture to approach too closely, but watch intently His every movement and gesture. He looks downward, benificent and

Library of Congress

modesn [modest?] , unaware of the glaring red slogans: "FATHER DIVINE IS GOD," unaware of the chair covered with 2 baize upon which has been lovingly embroidered in white letters: "GOD." He is not eating; he toys with an array of glistening silver utensils, spread fanwise on the tablecloth before him. He waits until the hullabaloo, the enthusiasm and the chanting has died down...Then he rises abruptly, deliberately, speaks:

"Peace, everyone! (EChoes of Peace, Thank you Father, etc.) Let us be gland [glad?] and rejoize rejoice in the livin ' splendor of the Lord! (So glad, Father!) I am here to materialize all spirichal things by the reconnition and the consciousness of Gawd among men! (Yeah Father!) My personal presence is immaterial, I am not bound personally, I am impersonal, as the unifying presence of all things. This is the mystery and the parable in the unity of the Spirit. Gawd is so effectively present, even when He is absent, which [groves?] all material things is spirichal, and all spirichal things is materal. Just the same it is true Cain did slay his brother Abel. Nevertheless he was and still is his brother's keeper. As a keeper of the sheep, as a shepherd, you shall cooperate together and look for the welfare of your fellow brother. (Hear, hear! Yeah man! So sweet, how sweet!, etc.)

"So why should they fight together? Why not come together in the unity of the Spirit an unite together as one in One Reality? The divers systems of the universe should unify together! With all comfort an security! For you an your body shall be unified together! Like Capital an Labor, in one Reality! I came here as one man in Jesus; as they were in the beginnin all of one language an of one speech. But this present generation has brought about a division, an a language of divers tongues was instituted! But I came here to bring them together on this earth, in the U.S.A., that they might come together as one man, E PLURIBUS UNUM!

3

"An I have been preordained as the kingdom of Gawd legalized, in the Constitution, by expressin that Gawd is a livin factor among us! Yes, it's a glorious privelege to live in the actual presence of Gawd, where it is rarest, it's a sweet feelin in the lan o the Free! (So

Library of Congress

glad, Father!) So it was essential to me as I came, to prepare myself a tabernacle, an I am not any special Anybody, any special nationality, any race, but am Hu-mann-ity itself! (Yeah, man. (We know you're Gawd!) I am not more than I am the other, for this is the livin reality of the establishment of the Kingdom of Gawd, E PLURIBUS UNUM! Which shall be purged of all its unrighteousness, which shall create its own righteousness, in its own image, as exemplified by this which is in the Fatherhood of Gawd, therefore you shall believe in Gawd an trust in Gawd as He trustas in Him, even as I will bring about Happiness, Prosperity, Peace, Pleasure, and Destiny of all my subjects!"

The Father, concluding, abruptly sits down; cheers, whoops and hysterical shrieks fill the hall. After a slight pause, a middleaged mulatto woman, attendant of the Lord, rises, dances around a bit, and begins:

"Father Divine is Gawd, we knows that! There woulden be no person speakin in all power dominion and authority if he wasn't Gawd. He is the Eternal King, Yeah man! He is ridin over evvy opposition, he' steppin over evvything, and thasa why I'm so happy thass why I'm so glad! It was misery befaw but now Gawd's here, an he's gonna bine de Devil an cast im down into the dungeon! Wot I'm talkin about it's not thinkin it's not believin it's knowin! Not a [soul on?] earth can stop Gawd Father Divine; he jes can't be stopped! (Haw, haw, cann' stop im nohow!) He been crucified he been hindered but now he's ri-i-isin triumphen, an no man in all 4 the universe can hender him they's gotta stan still they's gotta git undeneath. How kin ya hender Him who made all things? There is no other propitiation, man oney stands for a little while then he's gotta be brought into submission! O I'm tellin ya He gits sweeter an sweeter evvy day! He's the unseen guest but he's there an he knows it; if it's not righteousness he's like a moth, he eats it up! It's time ta git into subjection, it's time to stop think and consider, an take up the cross an follow on! FATHER DIVINE IS THE LIVIN PRESENCE OF THE LAWD, IN ALL POWER DOMINION AN AUTHORITY!"